SKILLS

Good Question: How Do I Cook With Curry Powder?

by FAITH DURAND | PUBLISHED: JAN 27, 2009

(Image credit: Apartment Therapy)

Here's a good question from reader Chris, who asks:

Dear Kitchn, Do you have any suggestions on cooking with curry? I bought three different kinds of curry powered from Penzey's. I'm really into the warm spice flavors and would like to incorporate them into some easy weeknight meals.

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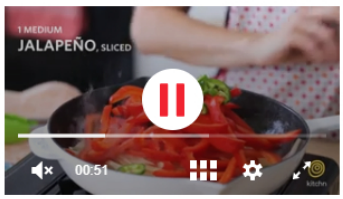

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I tried this Curried-Squash and Red-Lentil Soup recipe yesterday. I was expecting layers of flavors: rich squash, earthy beans and curry warmth. Instead, the soup just had this one flat spice note. Not very appealing. Can you give me more advice on cooking with curry? Thanks for your help.

– Chris

(Image credit: Apartment Therapy)

P.S. Do you know how garam masala and curry powder are different?

Chris, we took a look at the recipe (also pictured above), and we have a few ideas on why it didn't turn out very interesting.

• When trying to develop Indian flavors and spice in your cooking, remember that most Indian cooking relies on a multi-layered process of building spice and flavor. A spice powder isn't the primary way that sauces and soup get their flavor. The flavor is usually built slowly by cooking whole spices with onions, and then

sweating the onions with spices and oil (and sometimes ground spice powder too) until the flavor completely permeates the base sauce. Powdered spices are usually added nearer the end of cooking as a finishing kick of flavor — not the main flavor base. Take a look at this post for some instructions on building a curry from scratch.

• Also, many curry powders use turmeric as the primary ingredient. Turmeric is a strongly colored spice, but not the most strongly flavorful. Check the ingredients to see if it comes first in the ingredient list.

• One way to get more out of cooking with curry is to make your own blend. This ensures that the spices are fresh and toasted to your satisfaction. You can see more about curry powder and its alternatives in this post, including ideas for making your own.

• And finally: sometimes recipes made with spices like these need some time to let the flavors develop. If the soup tasted flat and disappointing at first, try leaving it in the refrigerator overnight and trying it again the next day. Even some curries and dishes made with whole spices really benefit from a rest to let the flavors bloom and permeate the whole dish.

• And on your PS: garam masala and curry powder are simply two different spice blends. In authentic Indian cooking both of these have infinite variations, especially since they're usually made fresh by the cook. But in American spice shops you'll usually find curry powder that is dominated by turmeric, cumin, and ginger. It is invariably yellow. Garam masala is usually darker colored and has a warmer, sweeter mix of cinnamon, coriander, cumin, and peppers. You can try making it yourself with our recipe here.

OK readers — your turn. What advice do you have for Chris?

Related: Try this recipe next: Recipe: Butternut Squash & Coconut Curry

Next question?

(Images: Penzey's; Mikkel Vang for *Gourmet*)

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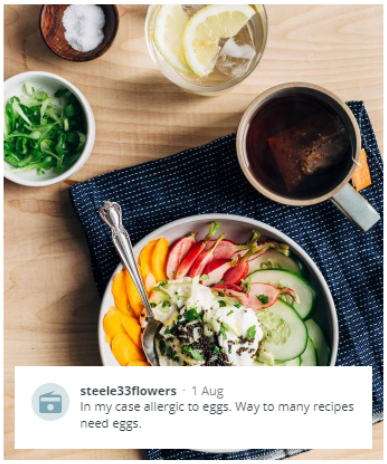

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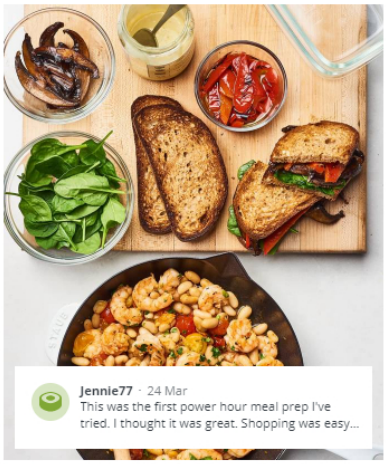

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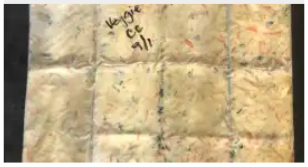

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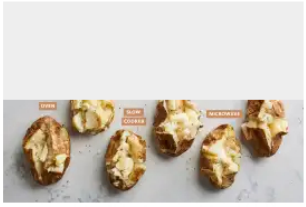

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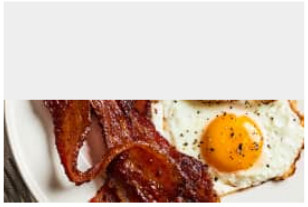

Recipe: Millionaire's Bacon

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Sheet Pan Peanut Chicken and Vegetables Is a Weeknight Dream

Raise your hand if you're making this for dinner tonight!

by Elizabeth Licata | May 3, 2019

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The 4-ingredient pantry glaze wins me over every time I make it.

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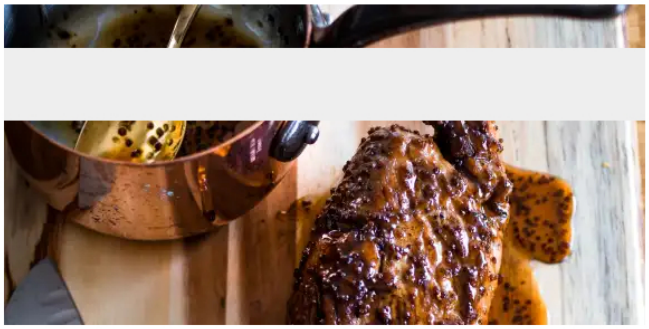

PARTNER

Recipe: Walnut & Black Bean Veggie Burgers

The ingredients and technique that ensure success every time.

by Creative Studio | May 1, 2019

This One-Pan Mushroom and Steak Recipe Is Calling Your Name

Kitchn's Delicious Links column highlights recipes we're excited about from the bloggers we love. Follow along every weekday as we post our favorites.Flank steak is a great way to mix up proteins during the week, so your dinner isn't all chicken, every day. It's a comparatively inexpensive cut of beef, and I find it way easier to cook than chicken, because you don't need to worry nearly as much about getting the meat to the exact right temperature.

by Elizabeth Licata | Apr 30, 2019

NEXT WEEK'S MEAL PLAN

Next Week's Meal Plan: A Week of Mediterranean Diet Dinners

Welcome to Next Week's Meal Plan! I want to help you find inspiration and ease some of the pain points that come with getting dinner on the table night after night, whether you're cooking for one or a family of eight. That's why, as promised, this series is shifting — every week I'll be answering reader requests and sharing meal plans that you want to see.It's not too late! What type of meal plans would you like to see?

by Kelli Foster | Apr 27, 2019

11 Easy & Essential Japanese Recipes to Make at Home

From crispy tonkatsu, to comforting udon, to sweet mochi.

by Nadine Lee | Apr 24, 2019

Our Most Popular Frittata Recipes

Beyond brunch, a frittata is a workhorse of a dish.

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You Can Make This Easy Italian Chicken Saltimbocca Recipe in Just 30 Minutes

Nothing boring about this recipe.

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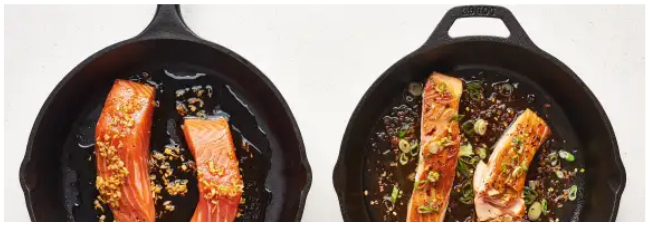
Everything You Need to Know About the Pescatarian Diet



Whether you're thinking about going fully pescatarian — or you just want to experiment with swapping red meat for fish more often — here's what to know upfront.

by Emily Shwake | Apr 23, 2019

10 Wildly Delicious Vegetarian Mushroom Recipes

We've rounded up a bunch of our favorite ways to weave mushrooms into vegetarian breakfast, lunch and dinner.

by Naomi Tomky | Apr 23, 2019

Halloumi Hummus Bowls Are the Lunch You've Been Looking For

Kitchn's Delicious Links column highlights recipes we're excited about from the bloggers we love. Follow along every weekday as we post our favorites.Bringing my lunch to work seems like a small thing, but it really changes my whole day.

by Elizabeth Licata | Apr 23, 2019

What's the Difference Between Jam and Jelly?

As I eat my weight in sweet strawberries this time of year, the subject of what to do with the abundance of spring and summer fruit comes to mind. I am usually more than content with enjoying berries and stone fruit as-is, but when I've gone a little overboard at the farmers market, jam is one of the many things I consider making. Or is it jelly? The two terms for fruit spread have always confused me a bit. Luckily, there's an easy way to distinguish between the two.

by Sheela Prakash | Apr 22, 2019

21 Easy Drop Dinners That Practically Make Themselves

If you have yet to meet the drop dinner, it's about time you introduced yourself. The concept? Dump a handful of things into a slow cooker or Instant Pot and let the appliance do all the work. Sure, you may have to chop up a few vegetables or sear a piece of meat in the Instant Pot, but really there's no work for you beyond that besides grabbing the plates and forks.

by Sheela Prakash | Apr 22, 2019

17 Easy Leftover Ham Recipes for the Week Ahead

This Easter we were gifted a 22-pound ham (!!!) and while we had our share of Easter feasts, we've still got a decent amount left over. I'm not even a little bit mad, because I know I can freeze some for future use and that there are plenty of ways — big and small — that we can use it up this week. Here are 17 of my favorite recipes for using up leftover ham. City hams freeze incredibly well. My suggestion? Freeze the ham in different forms for future use.

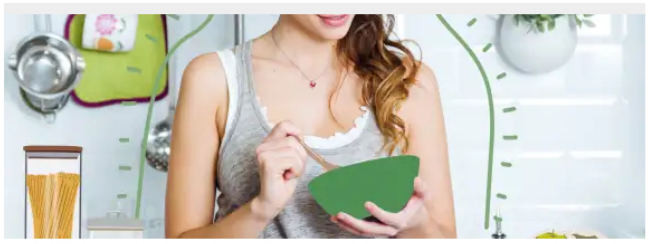
by Meghan Splawn | Apr 22, 2019

10 Little Ways to Create Less Waste in

the Kitchen

It's Earth Day — or Earth Month, as we prefer! — so naturally, we're turning our focus to the kitchen. And specifically ways we can create less waste and be more efficient and thoughtful with our output. Between packaging and food scraps, some degree of kitchen waste feels inevitable. For most, there's no way to eliminate it entirely, but there are a lot of small and easy ways to limit the amount of waste coming out of our kitchens.

by Kelli Foster | Apr 22, 2019



Recipe: Hawaiian Roll Egg-in-a-Hole

Meet my new favorite brunch dish: Hawaiian Roll Egg-in-a Hole. You might be familiar with egg-in-a-hole as a beloved childhood breakfast dish, but this version is easier to cook for a crowd, and delivers big on flavor. Serve this egg bake for family brunch, or whip it up when you're feeding a hungry crowd. Here are my tricks for nailing it every time. At first glance, this recipe is pretty straightforward: Make a well in each roll, crack in an egg, and bake!

by Meghan Splawn | Apr 20, 2019

How To Make the Best, Easiest Homemade Alfredo Sauce

You're just five ingredients and 15 minutes away from the creamy, cheesy sauce.

by Patty Catalano | Apr 19, 2019

Recipe: Spinach Artichoke Frittata

Frittatas have long been my go-to solution anytime I need to use up the sad-looking produce, wilting herbs, and little nubs of cheese in my fridge. It's not often I make them with a plan — until now. Inspired by my favorite cheesy dip and the warm spring weather, I came up with a frittata loaded with garlicky marinated artichoke hearts, earthy baby spinach, salty Parm, and rich sour cream. I knew it would be good, but it went above and beyond all of my expectations.

by Kelli Foster | Apr 19, 2019

The Quick Trick for Making Impossibly Fluffy Meringue

Temperatures are rising, flowers are blooming, and the spring season is now in full force. And doesn't it truly just feel like meringue time? Lots of fresh eggs mean more whites for cooking and baking — including light-as-air meringue cookies and luscious, meringue-topped pie. And when it comes to the latter, we are always on the hunt for ways to make meringue as light, fluffy, and luxurious as possible.

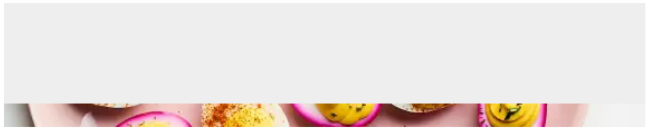
by Meghan Splawn | Apr 19, 2019

10 Deviled Egg Ideas Everyone Will Love

Deviled eggs are one of the most universally loved apps and snacks. Put a plate down at any holiday get-together or gathering and it's all but

guaranteed they'll be gobbled up in no time. I'm a purist at heart who believes you can never go wrong with the classic creamy, mustard-spiked filling, although there's a nearly endless variety of ways to dress up and reinvent these two-bite snacks. Here are 10 of our favorite deviled recipe ideas to consider.

by Kelli Foster | Apr 19, 2019



How Long Do You Actually Need to Cook Ham?

One of the pleasures of cooking a ham for a large gathering, obviously outside of eating it, is that the city hams we glaze and bake for holidays are already cooked. This should take the guesswork out of cooking a ham at home, right? But because most hams are quite large and have spiral cuts and giant bones to contend with, it can be hard to tell when a ham is actually "done" cooking. Here's everything you need to know about ham temperatures for reheating and serving.

by Meghan Splawn | Apr 19, 2019

Recipe: Polish Easter Babka

Easter Baba (or babka, or babka wielkanocna) has graced Easter tables for Polish families for centuries — along with mazurek cookies, painted eggs, and cheese desserts. The backstory is this: The dessert was originally said to be made in pans that resembled a tall Bundt pan, but without the hole in the center. One medieval recipe claims that their special version — which calls for 24 eggs and 1 tablespoon of freshly pounded vanilla beans that are beaten for more than an hour (!

by Tami Weiser | Apr 19, 2019

Recipe: Easy Ham and Cheese Quiche

If you're looking for a classic quiche recipe, this ham and cheese number is your answer. (It's especially perfect for Easter!)

by Grace Elkus | Apr 19, 2019

Recipe: Breakfast Deviled Eggs

To those of us who love deviled eggs (and we are legion), there is really no occasion that could not be made better by a platter of eggs stuffed with their own whipped yolks. Maybe that's Easter lunch, their most native habitat, or a work party where everyone — even the most keto-devout! — can fall upon that plate of little morsels. But what about breakfast? Do deviled eggs belong at breakfast? Oh yes. And I have the recipe to prove it.

by Faith Durand | Apr 19, 2019

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